

THE *1/1 Nov*
TESTIMONY

Of the

President, Professors, Tutors and Hebrew
Instructor of HARVARD COLLEGE in
Cambridge,

Against the Reverend

Mr. George Whitefield,

And his Conduct.



BOSTON, N.E.

Printed and sold By T. Fleet, at the Heart and Crown
in Cornhill. 1744.

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THE TESTIMONY.



IN regard of the Danger which we apprehend the People and Churches of this Land are in, on the Account of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, we have tho't ourselves oblig'd to bear our Testimony, in this public Manner, against him and his Way of Preaching, as tending very much to the Detriment of Religion, and the entire Destruction of the Order of these Churches of Christ, which our Fathers have taken such Care and Pains to settle, as by the Platform, according to which the Discipline of the Churches of *New England* is regulated: And we do therefore hereby declare, That we look upon his going about, in an Itinerant Way, especially as he hath so much of an enthusiastic Turn, utterly inconsistent with the Peace and Order, if not the very Being of these Churches of Christ.

And now, inasmuch as by a certain Faculty he hath of raising the Passions, he hath been the Means of rousing many from their Stupidity, and setting them on thinking, whereby some may have been made really better, on which Account the People, many of them, are strongly attach'd to him (tho' it is most evident, that he hath not any superior Talent at instructing the Mind, or shewing the Force and Energy of those Arguments for a religious Life, which are directed to in the everlasting Gospel) Therefore, that the People who are thus attach'd to him,

may not take up an unreasonable Prejudice against this our Testimony, we think it very proper to give some Reasons for it, which we shall offer, respecting the Man himself, and then his Way and Manner of Preaching.

First, as to the Man himself, whom we look upon as an Enthusiast, a censorious, uncharitable Person, and a Detractor of the People; which Things, if we can make out, all reasonable Men will doubtless excuse us, tho' some such, thro' a fascinating Curiosity, may still continue their Attachment to him.

First then, we charge him, with *Enthusiasm*. Now that we may speak clearly upon this Head, we mean by an *Enthusiast*, one that acts, either according to Dreams, or some sudden Impulses and Impressions upon his Mind, which he fondly imagines to be from the Spirit of God, persuading and inclining him thereby to such and such Actions, tho' he hath no Proof that such Perswasions or Impressions are from the holy Spirit: For the perceiving a strong Impression upon our Minds, or a violent Inclination to do any Action, is a very different Thing from perceiving such Impressions to be from the Spirit of God moving upon the Heart: For our strong Faith and Belief, that such a Motion on the Mind comes from God, can never be any Proof of it; and if such Impulses and Impressions be not agreeable to our Reason, or to the Revelation of the Mind of God to us, in his Word, nothing can be more dangerous than conducting ourselves according to them; for otherwise, if we judge not of them by these Rules, they may as well be the Suggestions of the evil Spirit: And in what Condition must that People be, who stand ready to be led by a Man that conducts himself according to his Dreams, or some ridiculous and unaccountable Impulses and Impressions on his Mind? And that this is Mr. Whitefield's Manner, is evident both by his Life, his Journals and

and his Sermons : In which, the Instances of this dangerous Turn are so many, that we cannot touch on more than a very few of them. From these Pieces then it is very evident, that he us'd to govern himself by his Dreams ; one Instance we have of this, is in his Life, pag. 12. *Near this Time I dream'd that I was to see God on M. Sinai. This made a great Impression upon me.* Another like Instance we have p. 39, 40. *I prayed that God wou'd open a Door to visit the Prisoners, quickly after I dream'd that one of the Prisoners came to be instructed by me ; the Dream was impress'd much upon my Heart ; in the Morning I went to the Door of the Goal.*—Once more, a like Instance we have pag. 43. *I dream'd I was talking with the Bishop — and that he gave me some Gold, which chinked in my Hands ; and p. 44. The Guineas Chinking in my Hand, put me in Mind of my Dream.*

Now if we consider these Instances, we must suppose him conducting himself by his Dreams : Nay, the Second looks as if he wou'd have us think, that it was a divine Direction to him, as was that of the divinely inspir'd Apostle, which caus'd him to attempt to preach the Gospel at Macedonia. And as plain it is, that he usually governed himself by some sudden Impulses and Impressions on his Mind ; and we have one Instance that may satisfy us, that his first setting out upon his Itinerant Busines, was from an Enthusiastic Turn. *Journal from London to Gibraltar, p. 3.* He says, *He will not mention the Reasons that perswaded him, that it was the divine Will that he should go abroad, because, they might not be deemed good Reasons by another ; but saith, He was as much bent as ever to go, tho' strongly-solicited to the Contrary, having asked direction from Heaven about it for a Year and an half.* Other Instances there are, wherein he shews it to be his Custom to attribute any common Turn of his Mind to a Motion of the Holy Spirit upon him, without any more Reason than any

Man may, any Recollections of his Memory, or sudden Suggestions of his own Understanding. Such an one you have, Journ. from *Gibral.* to *Savan.* p. 6. *I went to Bed with unusual Tho'ts and Convictions, that God wou'd do some great Things at Gibraltar*—: Another, Journ. from *Savann.* to *England*, p. 22. where he Says, That the Lesson before he left *Savannah* being St. Paul's Shipwreck; and that, before his leaving *Charlestown* being the First of *Jonab*, made such a deep Impression upon him, that he wrote to his Friend to acquaint him, he was apprehensive he should have a dangerous Voyage, and it happening to be bad Weather accordingly, he says, *God hath now shewed me, wherfore he gave these previous Notices.* So that every Scripture that came to his View, was receiv'd as the *Bash Kol* of the *Jews*, and he plainly shews himself as much directed by this Way of finding out the Will of God, as he calls it, as the old Heathen were by their *Sortes Homericæ*, *Virgilianæ*, &c. And of this we have a very full Instance, same Journ. Pag. 38. where you have a particular Application of the Words which appear'd upon the Doctor's first opening the Book of Common Prayer, viz. *The Lord hath visited and redeemed his People*; upon which he wisely observes, *so it was, for about 8 of Clock the Men saw Land.* Sometimes he speaks as if he had Communications directly from the Spirit of God, Journ. from *Gibral.* to *Savann.* p. 5. *God was pleased to shew me, it was not his Will.* Journ. from *Savann.* to *N. E.* p. 31. *The Power of the Lord came upon me:* So also, p. 38. and again, p. 68. *The Spirit of the Lord was upon me:* Journ. from *N. E.* to *Falmouth* in *Engl.* pag. 6. *The Lord gave me that Freedom that the Spirit came down upon them as a rushing mighty Wind.* Sometimes, and indeed very frequently, he (in a most enthusiastic Manner) applies, even the historical Parts of Scripture particularly to himself, and his own Affairs; and this Manner he endeavours particularly to vindi-

vindicate. Serm. of Searching the Scriptures, p 246. of his Sermons. It is this Application of — the historical Parts of Scripture when we are reading, that must render them profitable to us; and appeals to the Experiences of the Christian, that if he hath so consulted the Word of God, he has been as plainly directed how to act, as tho' he had consulted the Urim and the Thummim. For in this plain and full Manner, he says, p. 38. of his Life, *The holy Spirit bath, from Time to Time, let him into the Knowledge of divine Things, and bath directed him in the minutest Circumstances.* And no doubt hence it is that he says, for-mention'd Serm. p. 247. *That God, at all Times, Circumstances and Places, tho' never so minute, never so particular, will, if we diligently seek the Assistance of his holy Spirit, apply general Things to our Hearts:* Which tho' it may be true in some Measure as to the doctrinal and preceptive Parts of Scripture, yet is it evidently enthusiastical, to say so, as to the historical Parts of it. In this Manner he pretends a Direction from God to go to England from Savannah, p. 28. of that Journ. The like use we have made of Scripture, p. 36. so p. 42. *That he shou'd be cast upon Karrigbolt Island, because he had an Impression upon his Mind, as ~~that~~ what the Apostle tells the Mariners, That they must be cast upon a certain Island.*

But we proceed to mention one Piece of *Enthusiasm* of a very uncommon Turn, which shews to what a great Length this unhappy pernicious Disposition of the Mind may carry a Man. When Pag. 32 of his Life, he personates our blessed Lord himself, when in his Passion, says he, *It was suggested to me, that when Jesus cried out, I thirst, his Sufferings were near at an end; upon this I threw my self upon the Bed, crying out, I thirst, I thirst: Soon after I felt my Load go off — , and knew what it was truly to rejoice in the Lord.* And certainly it is easy enough to conceive, from what Spirit such a Suggestion must come.

To

To mention but one Instance more, tho' we are not of such Letter-learned as deny, that there is such an Union of Believers to Christ, whereby *they are one in him, as the Father and he are One*, as the Evangelist speaks, or rather the Spirit of God by him ; yet so Letter-learned we are, as to say, that that Passage in Mr. W.—'s Sermon of the *Indwelling of the Spirit*, p. 311: vol. of Sermons, contains the true Spirit of Enthusiasm, where he says, *to talk of any having the Spirit of God without feeling of it, is really to deny the Thing.* Upon which we say, That the Believer may have a Satisfaction, that he hath the Assistance of the Spirit of God with him, in so continual and regular a Manner, that he may be said to dwell in him, and yet have no feeling of it ; for the Metaphor is much too gross to express this (however full) Satisfaction of the Mind, and has led some to take the Expression literally, and hath (we fear) given great Satisfaction to many an Enthusiast among us since the Year 1740. from the swelling of their Breasts and Stomachs in their religious Agitations, which they have tho't to be *feeling the Spirit*, in its Operations on them. But it is no way necessary to instance any further upon this Head ; for the aforesaid Compositions are full of these Things.

The whole tends to perswade the World (and it has done so with respect to many) that Mr. W. hath as familiar a Converse and Communion with God as any of the Prophets and Apostles, and such as we all acknowledge to have been under the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

In the next Place, we look upon Mr. W. as an uncharitable, censorious and slanderous Man ; which indeed is but a natural Consequence of the heat of Enthusiasm, by which he was so evidently acted ; for this Distemper of the Mind always puts a Man into a vain Conceit of his own Worth and Excellency, which all his Pretences to Humility will never hide, as long as he evidently shews, that he would have the World think he hath a greater Familiarity

ty with God than other Men, and more frequent Communications from his Holy Spirit. Hence such a Man naturally assumes an Authority to dictate to others, and a Right to direct their Conduct and Opinions; and hence if any act not according to his Directions, and the Model of Things he had form'd in his own heated Brain, he is presently apt to run into slander, and stigmatize them as *Men of no Religion, unconvert'd, and Opposers of the Spirit of God:* And that such hath been the Behaviour of Mr. W. is also sufficiently evident as was the former Head. Hence were his monstrous Reflections upon the great and good Archbishop TILLOTSON, (as Dr. Increase Mather Stiles him) comparing his Sermons to the conjuring Books which the Apostles perswaded the People to destroy.

Hence also is that Reflection made upon Mr. Commissary Garden, Journal from Savana to N.E. p. 22. where he says, *he was oblig'd to tell him he believ'd he was an unconverted Man.* But what oblig'd him to tell all the World of it in his Journal? and why did he believe so? Because (he says) *all his Discourses were so inconsistent with and contrary to the Gospel.* But this (considering Mr. Garden's Character) must be only according to his peculiar Notions of Inconsistency. If the Commissary were too severe upon Mr. W. his Spirit might indeed be naturally irritated thereby; but he shou'd have consider'd, that it is no new Thing, that true Christians shou'd persecute (in some Degree) one another. Again, p. 44. He insinuates in a very unchristian Manner, *That Mr. H—— n of Newp—t bad no experimental Knowledge of the N. Birth.*

The next Instance we shall note, is the reproachful Reflections upon the Society which is immediately under our Care. p. 55. Where are observable his Rashness and his Arrogance. His Rashness, in publishing such a disadvantageous Character of Us, *viz.* Because some Body had so inform'd him. Surely he ought, if he had followed

our Saviour's Rule, to have had a greater Certainty of the Truth of what he publish'd of us to the whole World. But his Arrogance is more flagrant still, that such a young Man as he should take upon him to tell what Books we shou'd allow our Pupils to read. But then he goes further still, when he says, p. 95. both of *Yale College* as well as ours, *As for the Universities, I believe it may be said, Their Light is now become Darkness, Darkness that may be felt.* What a deplorable State of Immorality and Ir-religion has he hereby represented Us to be in! And as this is a most wicked and libellous Falshood (at least as to our College) as such we charge it upon him. But why doth he say thus? Why, because this is complain'd of by the most godly Ministers. Here we are at a Loss to think whom he means by the most godly Ministers. Certainly not the Rev. Gentlemen of the Town of *Boston* (with whom nevertheless he was most acquainted) for they are in the Government of the College, have assisted in making the Laws by which it is govern'd, and constantly visit us by a Committee, and themselves four Times in a Year, and make Examination how the Laws are executed. Besides, we don't know that he hath been pleas'd to allow to any one of them any such religious Character, in any one of his Journals, as should make us think he means them, but rather the reverse. Vid. p. 76 of his Journal from *N. E.*

But we shall finish this Head of his *Censoriousness*, when we have mention'd his pernicious Reflections upon the Ministers of the Churches in this Land. We say this Land; for it is far from a torturing of the Words, to suppose he directly means them, when he says, p. 70. *He is perswaded the generality of Preachers talk of an unknown unfelt Christ;* tho' he hath evasively said (since he came this time) that *he did not restrain the Expression to the Ministers of N. England, tho' he did not exclude them.* Admirably satisfactory this Explanation! But he can't come off so easily

easily in the Reflection he makes upon our Ministers, p. 95. *Many, nay most perhaps that preach, I fear, do not experimentally know Christ* — Is it possible he should say, this is no Charge upon the Ministers of these Churches? It is true, it is not so in Form; but is it not one of the most uncharitable Things he cou'd have done, to manifest these his Fears to all the World, without Ground? Without Ground, we say; for as to the greatest Part of them by far, their Conversation is as becomes the Gospel, and we may challenge him and all the World to shew the contrary,

And now let the World judge, if we have not the highest Reason to tax Mr. *W.* as an *uncharitable, censorious and slanderous Man*; that he has been guilty of gross Breaches of the *Ninth Command* of the moral Law, and an evident disregard to the Laws of Christian Charity, as they are delivered to us in the N. Testament. And now is it possible that we should not look upon him as the blameable Cause of all the Quarrels on the Account of Religion, which the Churches are now engaged in? and this not only on account of his own Behaviour; but also as the coming of those hot Men amongst us afterwards (who, together with the *Em-
borthers* that accompanied them, cultivated the same uncharitable Disposition in our Churches) was wholly owing to his Influence and Example. So that all the Errors, Confusions and Quarrels that our Churches are now in, are owing to this censorious, most unchristian Carriage and Disposition; and it is, to us, a very marvellous Thing, when such Behaviour as Mr. *W.* &c. have used, is plainly and directly contrary to the moral Law, and all the Rules of Christianity, that the People, in general, should not be able to see it.

Again, We think it highly proper to bear our Testimony against Mr. *W.* as we look upon him a *Deluder of the People*. How he designs to manage in this Affair now, we know not; but we mean, that he hath much deluded

them, and therefore suppose we have Reason in this respect to guard against him. And here we mean more especially as to the Collections of Money, which, when here before, by an extraordinary mendicant Faculty, he almost extorted from the People. As the Argument he then used was, *the Support and Education of his dear Lambs at the Orphan-House*, who (he told us, he hop'd) might in Time preach the Gospel to us or our Children ; so it is not to be doubted, that the People were greatly encouraged to give him largely of their Substance, supposing they were to be under the immediate Tuition and Instruction of himself, as he then made them to believe ; and had not this been their Tho't, it is, to us, without all Peradventure, they would never have been perswaded to any considerable Contribution upon that Head ; and this, notwithstanding, he hath scarce seen them for these four Years ; and besides hath left the Care of them with a Person, whom these Contributors know nothing of, and we ourselves have Reason to believe is little better than a *Quaker* ; so that in this Regard we think the People have been greatly deceiv'd.

Furthermore, the Account which Mr. W. hath given the World of his Disbursement of the several Contributions, for the use of his Orphan House (wherein there are several large Articles, and some of about a Thousand Pounds, our Currency, charg'd in a very summary Way, viz. For sundries, no Mention being made therein what the Sum was expended for, nor to whom it was paid) is by no means satisfactory. And as we have so much Reason to be dissatisfied with the Man, so we think,

-Secondly, We have as much Reason to dislike and bear Testimony against the Manner of his Preaching ; and this in Two respects, both as an *Extempore* and as an *Itinerant* Preacher.

And first, as to his *extempore* Manner of preaching ; this we think by no means proper, for that it is impossible that any Man should be able to manage any Argument with that Strength, or any Instruction with that Clearness in an *extempore* Manner, as he may with Study and Meditation. Besides, it is observable that your *extempore* Preachers give us almost always the same Things in the applicatory Part of their Sermons, so that it is often very little akin to their Text, which is just open'd in a cursory, and not seldom in a perverted Manner, and then comes the same kind of Harangue which they have often used before, as an *Application* ; so that this is a most lazy Manner, and the Preacher offers that which cost him nothing, and is accordingly little Instructive to the Mind, and still less cogent to the reasonable Powers. Now Mr. W. evidently shows, that he would have us believe his Discourses are *extempore*, and indeed from the Rashness of some of his Express-

Expressions, as well as from the dangerous Errors vented in them, it is very likely : Hence, no doubt, were the many unguarded Expressions in his Sermons when he was here before ; and since he has come again, he hath told us, " That Christ loves unregenerate Sinners with a Love of Complacency :" Nay, he hath gone rather further, and said, " That God loves Sinners as Sinners ; which, if it be not an unguarded Expression, must be a thousand times worse : For we cannot look upon it as much less than Blasphemy, and shows him to be stronger in the Antinomian Scheme than most of the Professors of that Heresy themselves ; and that this is not unlikely, is to be suspected, because the Expression was repeated, and when he was tax'd with it, by a certain Gentleman, he made no Retractations.

But lastly, We think it our Duty to bear our strongest Testimony against that *Itinerant* Way of preaching which this Gentleman was the first promoter of among us, and still delights to continue in : For if we had nothing against the *Man*, either as an *Enthusiast*, or *uncharitable* or *delusive* Person, yet we apprehend this Itinerant Manner of preaching to be of the worst and most pernicious Tendency.

Now by an *Itinerant* Preacher, we understand One that hath no particular Charge of his own, but goes about from Country to Country, or from Town to Town, in any Country, and stands ready to Preach to any Congregation that shall call him to it ; and such an one is Mr. W. for it is but trifling for him to say (as we hear he bath) That he requires in order to his preaching any where, that the Minister also should invite him to it ; for he knows the Populace have such an Ite after him, that when they generally desire it, the Minister (however diverse from their's, his own Sentiments may be) will always be in the utmost Danger of his People's quarrelling with, if not departing from him, shou'd he not consent to their impetuous Desires. Now as it is plain, no Man will find much Business as an *Itinerant* Preacher, who hath not something in his Manner, that is (however trifling, yea, and erroneous too, yet) very taking and agreeable to the People ; so when this is the Case, as we have lately unhappily seen it, it is then in his Power to raise the People to any Degree of Warmth he pleases, whereby they stand ready to receive almost any Doctrine he is pleased to broach ; as hath been the Case as to all the Itinerant Preachers who have followed Mr. W's. Example, and thrust themselves into Towns and Parishes, to the Destruction of all Peace and Order, whereby they have to the great impoverishment of the Community, taken the People from their Work and Business, to attend their Lectures and Exhortations, always fraught with Enthusiasm, and other pernicious Errors.

But,

But, which is worse, and it is the natural Effect of these Things, the People have been thence ready to despise their own Ministers, and their usefulness among them, in too many Places, hath been almost destroy'd.

Indeed, if there were any thing leading to this manner of Management in the Directions and Instructions given, either by our Saviour or his Apostles, we ought to be silent, and so wou'd a Man of any Modesty, if (on the other hand) there be nothing in the N. Testament leading to it. And surely Mr. W. will not have the Face to pretend he acts now as an *Evangelist*, tho' he seems to prepare for it in Journ. from *N. E.* to *Falmouth in England*, p. 12. where he says, *God seems to shew me it is my Duty to Evangelize, and not to fix in any particular Place*: For the Duty of that Officer certainly was not to go preaching of his own Head from one Church to another, where Officers were already settled, and the Gospel fully and faithfully preached. And it is without Doubt, that the Mind and Will of Christ, with respect to the Order of his Churches, and the Business of his Ministers in them, is plainly enough to be understood in the N. Testament; and yet Mr. W. has said of late, in one of his Sermons, he thinks that an Itinerant Manner of preaching may be very convenient for the furtherance of the good of the Churches, if it were under a good Regulation. Now we are apt to imagine, if such an Officer wou'd have been useful, Christ himself wou'd have appointed him; and therefore (under Favour) this is to be wise above what is written, and supposes either that our Lord did not know, or that he neglected to appoint all such Officers in the Ministry, as wou'd further in the best manner the Truths of the Gospel: And it is from such Wisdom as this, that all the Errors of *Popery* have come into the *Christian Church*, while the Directions of the Word of God were not strictly adhered to, but one tho't this Way or that Ceremony was very convenient and significant, and another another, till they have dress'd up the Church in such a monstrous heap of Appendages, that at this Day it can hardly be discern'd to be a Church of Christ.

And now, upon the whole, having, we think, made it evident to every one that is not prejudic'd on his Side (for such as are so, we have little hope to convince) that Mr. W. is chargeable with that *Enthusiasm, censoriousness and delusive Management* that we have tax'd him with; and since also he seems resolv'd for that Itinerant Way of preaching, which we think so destructive to the Peace of the Churches of Christ; we cannot but bear our faithful Testimony against him, as a Person very unfit to preach about as he has done heretofore, and as he has now begun to do.

And

And we wou'd earnestly, and with all due respect, recommend it to the Rev. Pastors of these Churches of Christ, to advise with each other in their several Associations, and consider whether it be not high Time to make a stand against the Mischiefs, which we have here suggested as coming upon the Churches.

Harvard College, Dec. 28. 1744.

EDWARD HOLYOKE, *President.*

HENRY FLYNT, *Tut. & Soc.*

EDWARD WIGGLESWORTH, *Soc. & S. T. P. Holliss.*

JUDAH MONIS, *Instr. Hebr.*

BELCHER HANCOCK, *Tut.*

JOSEPH MAYHEW, *Tut. & Soc.*

THOMAS MARSH, *Tut.*

JOHN WINTHROP, *Math. & Phil. Nat. Prof. Holliss.*





THE
HOLY
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John
3:8

